the remote circuit.

32. The patient control unit of claim 31 wherein the first switch is a manually operable nurse call switch, and the self-test switch is a field effect transistor.

33. A patient control unit coupled to a remote circuit, including:

a first switch having an ON position and an OFF position, the first switch providing a first signal over a first conductor to the remote circuit when in the ON position; and

a second switch coupled between the first conductor and a second conductor such that when a test signal is present on the second conductor, the second switch provides the first signal on the first conductor to indicate the continuity of the first conductor connection between the remote circuit and the first switch.

34. A patient care and communication system including:

a nurse station; and

a plurality of remote stations coupled to the nurse station, each remote station including a processor to facilitate communications with the nurse station and a patient control unit coupled to the processor having a first switch for sending a first signal to the processor over a conductor, and a second switch actuated by a second signal from the processor to verify the continuity of the conductor between the processor and the first switch.

35. The patient care and communication system of claim 34 wherein the first signal is a nurse call signal that the remote station relays to the nurse station.

36. Apparatus for monitoring and controlling environmental facilities within a room of a health care facility, including:

a wireless receiver located in the room;

a wireless transmitter located in the room having a switch for transmitting control data to the receiver;

a controller coupled to the receiver and the environmental facilities, the controller controlling the environmental facilities in response to the control data; and

a nurse control station located outside the room and coupled to the receiver for receiving the control data to monitor the environmental facilities.

37. A method for monitoring and controlling environmental facilities within a room of a health care facility, including:

positioning a wireless receiver in the room;

positioning a wireless transmitter in the room for transmitting control data to the receiver;

connecting a controller to the wireless receiver and the environmental facilities, the controller being configured to receive the control data from the transmitter and control the environmental facilities in response thereto;

coupling a nurse control station located outside the room to the receiver such that the nurse control station receives the control data to monitor the environmental facilities; and

activating the transmitter to transmit the control data.

B1

38. A patient care and communication system, including:

a private branch exchange connected to a telephone exchange and a plurality of telephones for facilitating telephone communication between the telephones and the telephone exchange; and

a plurality of remote stations linked to a central station, each remote station having:

a processor for facilitating communications relating to patient care with the central station,

telephone circuitry connected to the private branch exchange for facilitating telephone communication therewith, and

a sensor for sensing signals from portable transmitter units;

wherein the central station facilitates communications among the remote stations by determining which remote stations are transmitting and which remote stations are receiving, and by establishing communication links between the transmitting and the receiving stations.

39. A patient care and communication system, including:

a plurality of remote stations positioned at various locations throughout a facility;

a plurality of zone controllers;

a central station interconnecting the remote stations and facilitating communications therebetween by determining which remote stations are transmitting and which remote stations are receiving, and by establishing communication links between the transmitting and the receiving stations through the zone controllers, the communication links being operated in a master-slave relationship wherein a master station controls a data link included in the communication link and transmits command frames to a slave station.

B1

40. The system of claim 39 wherein the zone controllers are the master stations and the remote stations are the slave stations.

41. The system of claim 39 wherein the master station communicates with the slave station in one of an initialization state and an information transfer state.

42. The system of claim 39 wherein the slave station responds to a command frame by sending a message frame to the master station.

43. The system of claim 39 wherein the message frame includes five fields.

44. A patient care and communication system, including:

a plurality of remote stations positioned at various locations throughout a facility; a central station interconnecting the remote stations and facilitating communications therebetween by determining which remote stations are transmitting and which remote stations are receiving, and by establishing communication links between the transmitting and the receiving stations; and

a fail safe bus connected between each remote station;

wherein upon failure of the central station, the remote stations operate in a local mode utilizing the fail safe bus.

45. The system of claim 44 wherein the remote stations operate in a local mode utilizing the fail safe bus in response to activation of a fail safe device connected to one of the remote

stations.

46. The system of claim 45 wherein the fail safe device is one of a nurse call switch, a code blue switch, and an emergency switch.

47. A patient care and communication system, including:

a plurality of remote stations positioned at various locations throughout a facility, each remote station including a processor and a memory;

a central station interconnecting the remote stations; and

a plurality of patient control units, each connected to a respective remote station, each patient control unit including a nurse call button;

B1 wherein upon activation of a nurse call button, the processor of a respective remote station generates a message frame and stores the message frame in the memory of the respective remote station.

48. The system of claim 47 further including a plurality of zone controllers connected between the plurality of remote stations and the central station, each of the zone controllers including a memory.

49. The system of claim 48 wherein the message frame is transferred to a zone controller memory when the zone controller polls the respective remote station.

50. The system of claim 49 wherein the message frame is transferred to the central station when the central station polls the zone controller.

51. A patient care and communication system, including:

a plurality of remote stations positioned in a plurality of patient rooms throughout a facility, each remote station including a microphone;

a central station interconnecting the remote stations; and

a plurality of nurse control stations connected to the central station, each nurse control station including a monitoring switch;

wherein upon activation of a monitoring switch at a particular nurse control station, the